

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 173699

13

ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 EB-11 /067 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:WDYESS:CR

X-22137 8/30/73

APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:WLUERS

EUR/SOV:WDYESS

INR:DGRAVES

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R 302335Z AUG 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 173699

E.O. 11652: GDS-3

TAGS: PINS, UR

SUBJECT: ZORZA ARTICLE ON DEATH PENALTY

1. ACCORDING TO VICTOR ZORZA ARTICLE CARRIED IN WASHINGTON POST AUGUST 28, USSR IS "REVIVING" AND "AGAIN BEGINNING" TO IMPOSE DEATH SENTENCES FOR ECONOMIC CRIMES. ZORZA ASSERTS THAT IN RECENT MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF DEATH SENTENCES IN ARMENIA, TADJIKISTAN, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, AND RUSSIA WHICH HAVE APPEARED ONLY IN LOCAL PAPERS. ZORZA GIVES NO FIGURES.

2. FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE WE INCLINED TO THINK ZORZA MAY BE OVERDRAMATIZING SHIFT IN SOVIET POLICY AND THAT THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY OCCASIONAL INCIDENTS OF IMPOSED DEATH SENTENCES FOR ECONOMIC CRIMES OVER RECENT YEARS. EMBASSY COMMENT WOULD BE APPRECIATED. ZORZA ARTICLE POUCHED TO EMBASSY. ROGERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE173699
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WDYESS:CR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS LUERS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973084/aaaaacut.tel
Line Count: 51
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 1
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Sep-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZORZA ARTICLE ON DEATH PENALTY
TAGS: PINS, UR
To: MOSCOW LENINGRAD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005